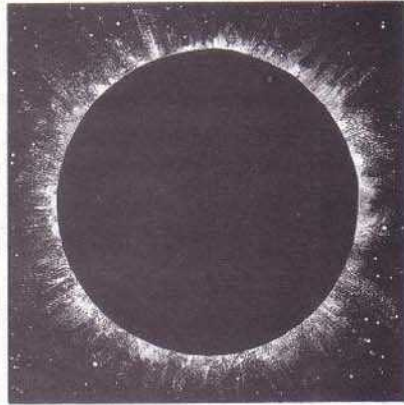
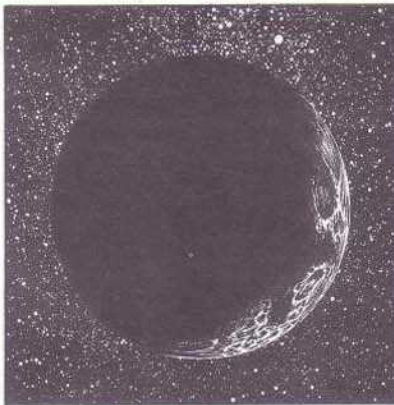
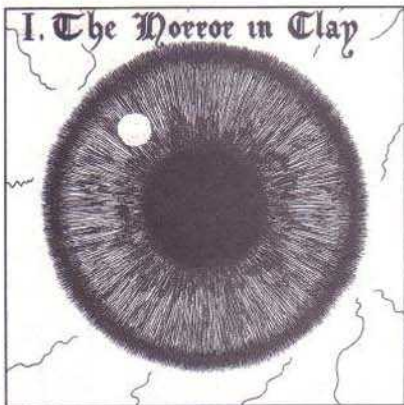


THE MOST MERCIFUL THING IN THE WORLD, I THINK, IS THE INABILITY

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents.....

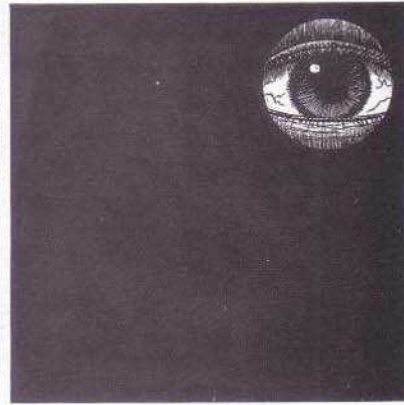
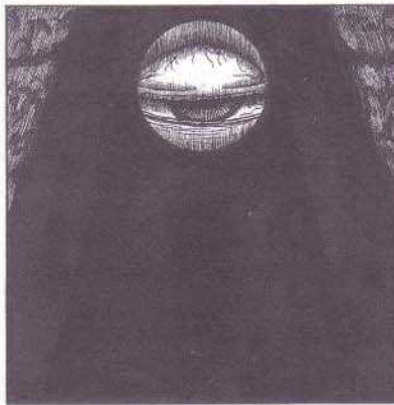
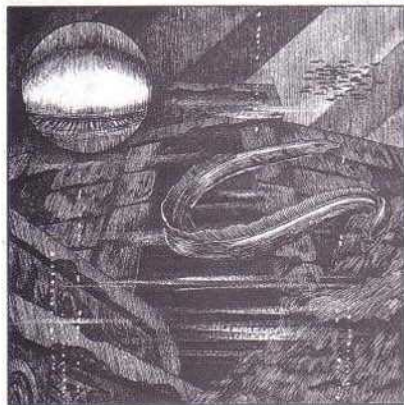
I. The Horror in Clay



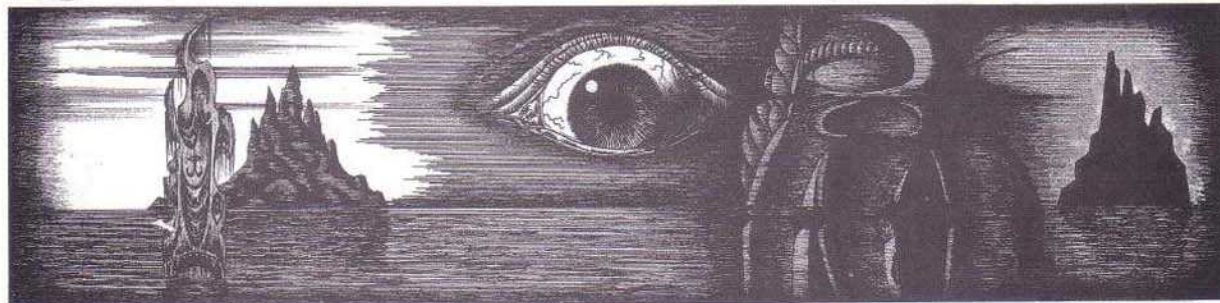
We live on placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity and it was not meant that we should voyage far.



Some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. Theosophists have guessed at the



awesome grandeur of the cosmic cycle wherein our world and human race form transient incidents. They have hinted at strange survival in terms which would freeze the blood if not masked by a bland optimism. But it is not from them



that there came the glimpse of forbidden aeons which chills my thoughts and haunts my dreams.

What dread glimpse flashed out from an accidental piecing together of separated things.

THE CALL OF CTHULHU

I hope that no one else will accomplish this piecing out.



Certainly, if I live, I shall never knowingly supply a link in so hideous a chain.

BY H.P. LOVECRAFT.

Illustrated by John Coulthart.

My knowledge of the thing began with the death of my great uncle, George Gammell Angell.



He had been a renowned Professor Emeritus of Semitic Languages in Brown University, Providence.

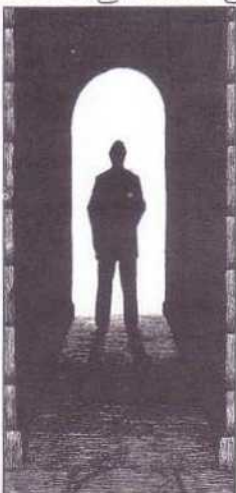
He was at this time, as has been noted, a devotee of the methods of decipherment. Thus, in a bizarre set of circumstances which I have never been able to understand, he was involved at the base of the sculpture were considered Professor Webb and his Eskimo researches provided a standard course of practice.

It can be seen here to bear no relation to any

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Locally, interest was intensified by the obscurity of the cause of death.

The professor, returning from the Newport book, had fallen after being jostled by a negro on the hill leading to Williams Street.



The doctors pointed to lesion of the heart as the cause and at the time I saw no reason to dissent from this dictum.



Only lately have I been inclined to wonder.



Among his files I had found a locked box. I did not find the key till it occurred to me to examine the personal ring he carried with him.



The convenes, a clay bas-relief and assorted notes and cuneings, were quite a source of mystery.

san sacrifices. It is only recent extracted from one of the following

IA! SAKKAKTH! IAK SAKKAKH! IA! UTURKU XUL! IA! IA ZIKUL IA! HUBSUR! KAKHTAKHTAMON IAS!

ar avoids any attempts at reasc... the Cult of Dead Names. Present

- CHULHU - Most common pronunc
- KTHULU - Scandinavian (?)
- KUTULU - Term used by some
- CUTHALU - Sumerian
- CTHA-LU - Chaldean (?)

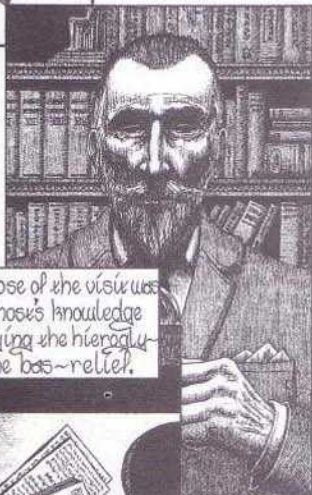
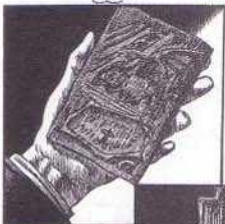
vealed by further investigation... ciation of the relative similar... rational explanation and yet the... a phrase which was often repeat



How had he possessed him to conceal them so?

CTHULHU CULT

was how the document among the cavings was headed. The first half of the manu- script ~ Dream and Dream Work of H. A. Wilcox, 7 Thomas St., Providence R. I. ~ told a very peculiar tale.

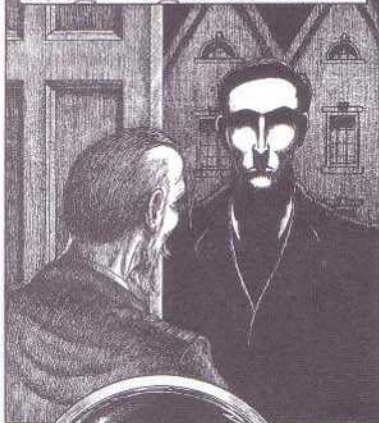


The purpose of the visit was to ask his host's knowledge in identifying the hieroglyphics on the bas-relief.



He had explained the fresh appearance of the tablet in his characteristic manner:

On March 1, 1925, a young man by the name of Henry Anthony Wilcox had called upon Professor Angell bearing the singular bas-relief.



He was a precocious youth of known genius but great eccentricity studying sculpture at the Rhode Island School of Design.

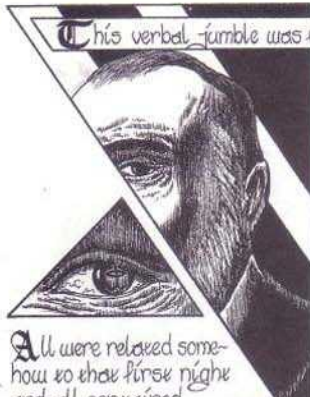


It is new, indeed, for I made it last night in a dream of strange cities; and dreams are older than brooding Tyre, or the contemplative Sphinx, or garden-girdled Babylon.

The night before, a slight earth tremor had excited his imagination. Upon retiring he had had a dream of great Cyclopean cities.



From some undermined point had come a chaotic sensation, a sound he later attempted to render:
CTHULHU FHTAGN.



This verbal jumble was the key to a recollection which excited and disturbed the professor. After many questions he besieged his visitor with demands for future reports of dreams, details of which followed in the manuscript.



All were relaxed somehow to that first night and all conceived the same cryptic sounds, a subterranean voice showing senseless words: 'Cehulhu', 'R'lyeh'.



On March 22nd Wilcox was stricken with an obscure fever.



His frantic cries roused neighbours who summoned the doctor. During his ravings he seemed to be obsessed with some gigantic 'thing' which walked or lumbered about.

The malady ceased on April 2nd. Wilcox awoke unaware of either dream or reality since March 22nd.



All traces of strange dreaming vanished with his recovery.

WILD FACTS DEVELOPED IN CIVIL DEFENSE

A weird bunch of cussings, all told, which I foolishly set aside, hardly pausing to consider the weight of their implications.

II. The Tale of Inspector Legrasse

The old matters which had made the sculptor's dream so significant to my uncle formed the second half of his long manuscript.



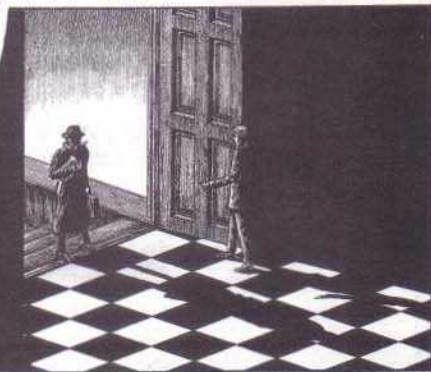
Once before he had seen the hellish outlines of the nameless monstrosity, puzzled over the hieroglyphics and heard the ominous syllables which can be rendered only as 'Cthulhu'.

In 1908, he had held a prominent part in the deliberations of the American Archaeological Society in St. Louis.



They had been approached by a stranger from New Orleans—John Raymond Legrasse, an inspector of police.

His request for enlightenment was prompted by professional considerations.

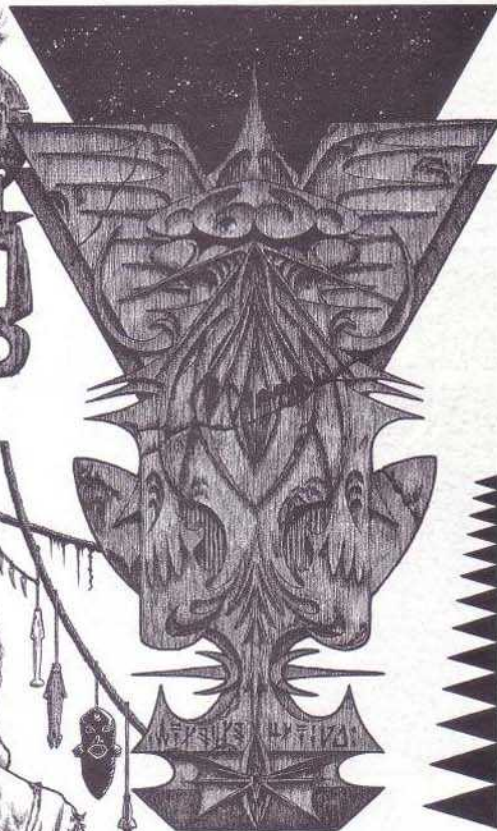
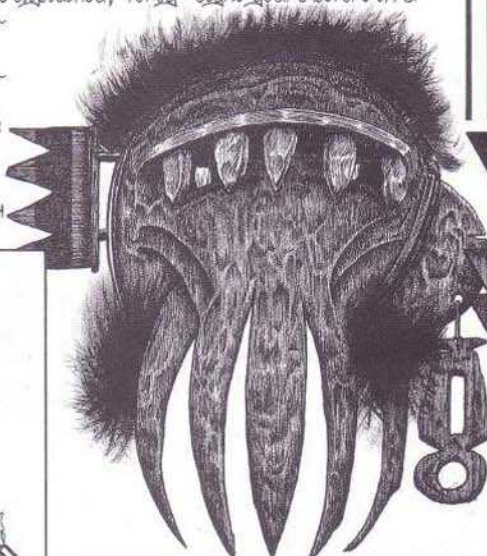
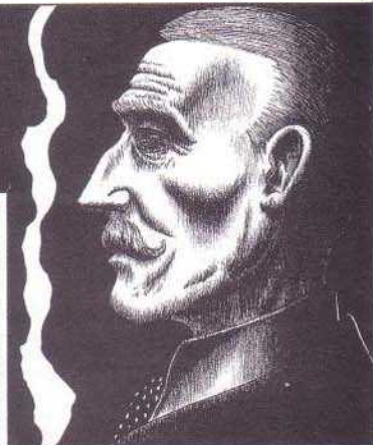


The stone sexueve which he bore had been captured during a raid on a supposed voodoo meeting. Of its origin nothing could be discovered and the police were anxious to place it and reveal the source of the cult.

Although excited at the sight of the green stone figure, the assembled scientists severely shook their heads and confessed defeat at the inspector's problem.

There was one, however, who suspected a touch of bizarre familiarity in what he saw - William Channing Webb, professor of anthropology in Princeton University.

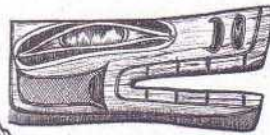
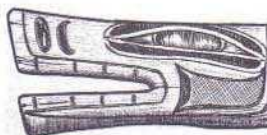
With some diffidence, he explained: forty-eight years before in a tour of Greenland and Iceland, he had encountered a singular tribe of degenerate Eskimos, shunned by others, whose religion, he was told, came down from ancient deons before the world was made.



Their nameless rites and sacrifices were addressed to a supreme elder devil or *torngasuk*, one of whose rituals Professor Webb had taken down from an aged *angahok* or wizard-priest.



Most striking to him now was the fetish they danced around when the aurora was high - in all essential features it was a rough parallel of the thing now lying before the meeting.

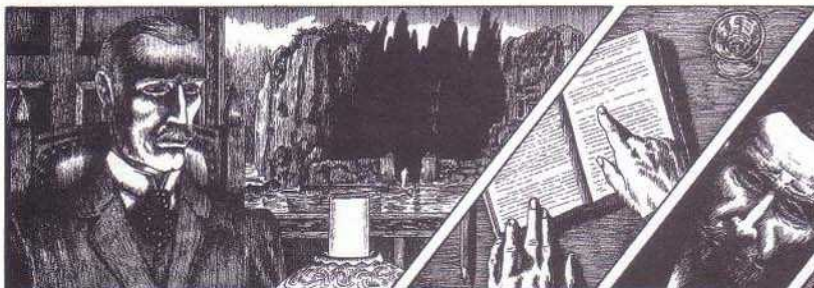


These data, received with astonishment by the assembled members, proved doubly exciting to Inspector Legrasse. Having copied an oral ritual from the swamp cult-worshippers, he besought the professor to remember the syllables taken down amongst the diabolical Eskimos.



There then followed a comparison of details and a moment of dazed

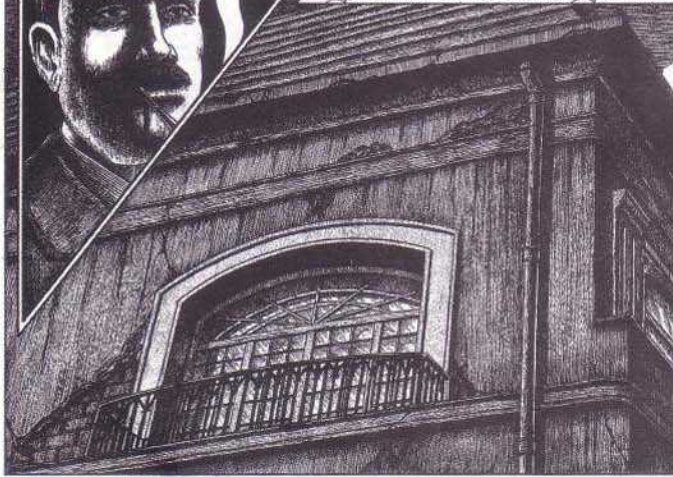
silence when the two agreed on the virtual identity of the phrase common to rituals worlds of distance apart: 'Ph'nglui, mglw' nath Cehulhu R'lyeh wagh nagl Phegan.'



Legrasse had even managed to extract the meaning of the words from one of the prisoners: 'In his house at R'lyeh dead Cehulhu waits dreaming.'



In response to a general urgent demand, he proceeded to relate his experience with the swamp-cult.

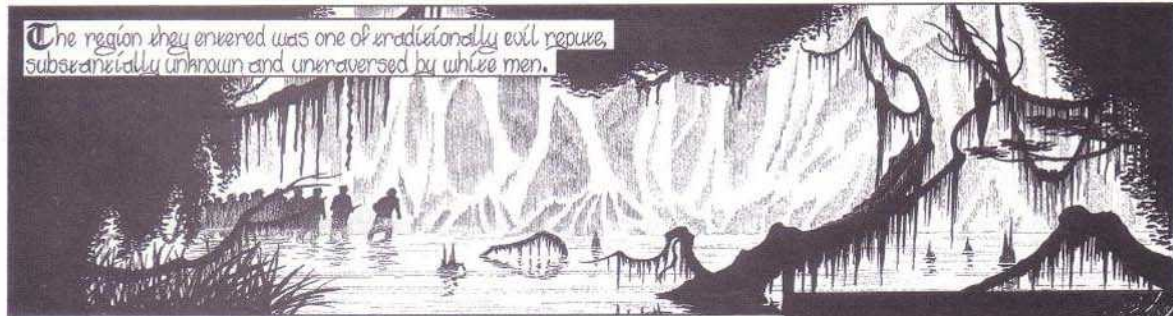


On November 1, 1907, there had come to New Orleans police a frantic summons from squatters in the country to the south. The thing which held them in error, they said, was voodoo of a more terrible sort than they had ever known and some of their women and children had disappeared since the malevolent kom-kom had begun beating far within the black haunted woods.



So a body of twenty police set out in the late afternoon with a squatter as a guide into the dank cypress swamps where day never came.

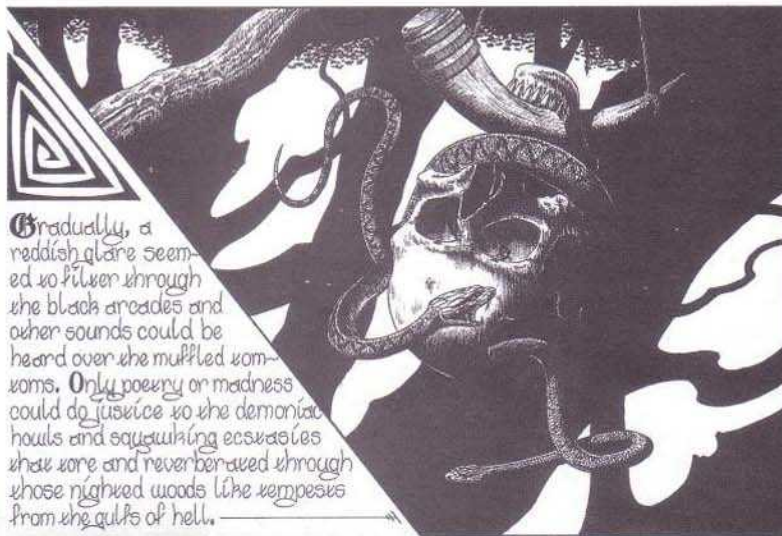
The region they entered was one of traditionally evil repute, substantially unknown and untraversed by white men.



Legends told of a hidden lake where dwelt a formless white polypous thing with luminous eyes worshipped by bat-winged devils from caverns in the inner earth.



It was nightmare itself, and to see it was to die.

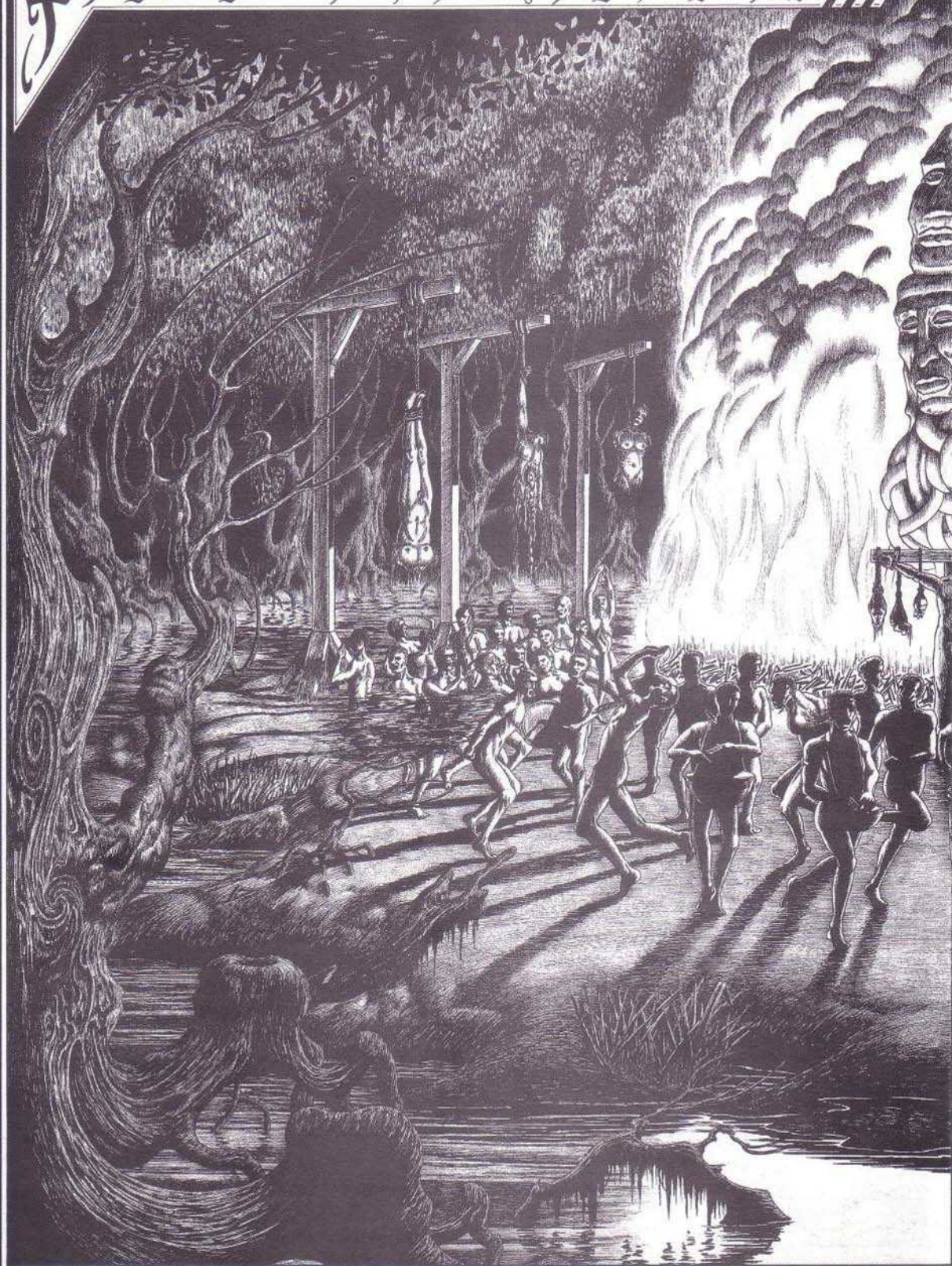


Gradually, a reddish glare seemed to filter through the black arcades and other sounds could be heard over the muffled kom-koms. Only poetry or madness could do justice to the demonic howls and squawking ecstasies that tore and reverberated through those nighted woods like tempests from the gulfs of hell.



The trees thinned and, as the spectacle revealed itself that hideous phrase rose in the air...

Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn' ///



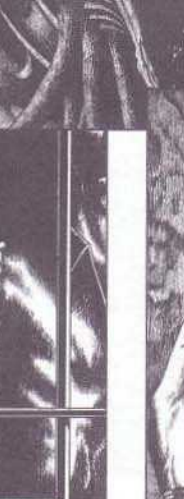
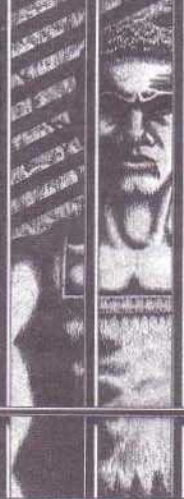


It may have only been imagination or echoes but one of the men, Joseph D. Galvez, fancied he heard anaphonal responses to the ritual, the faint beating of wings and a glimpse of shining eyes in the woods.



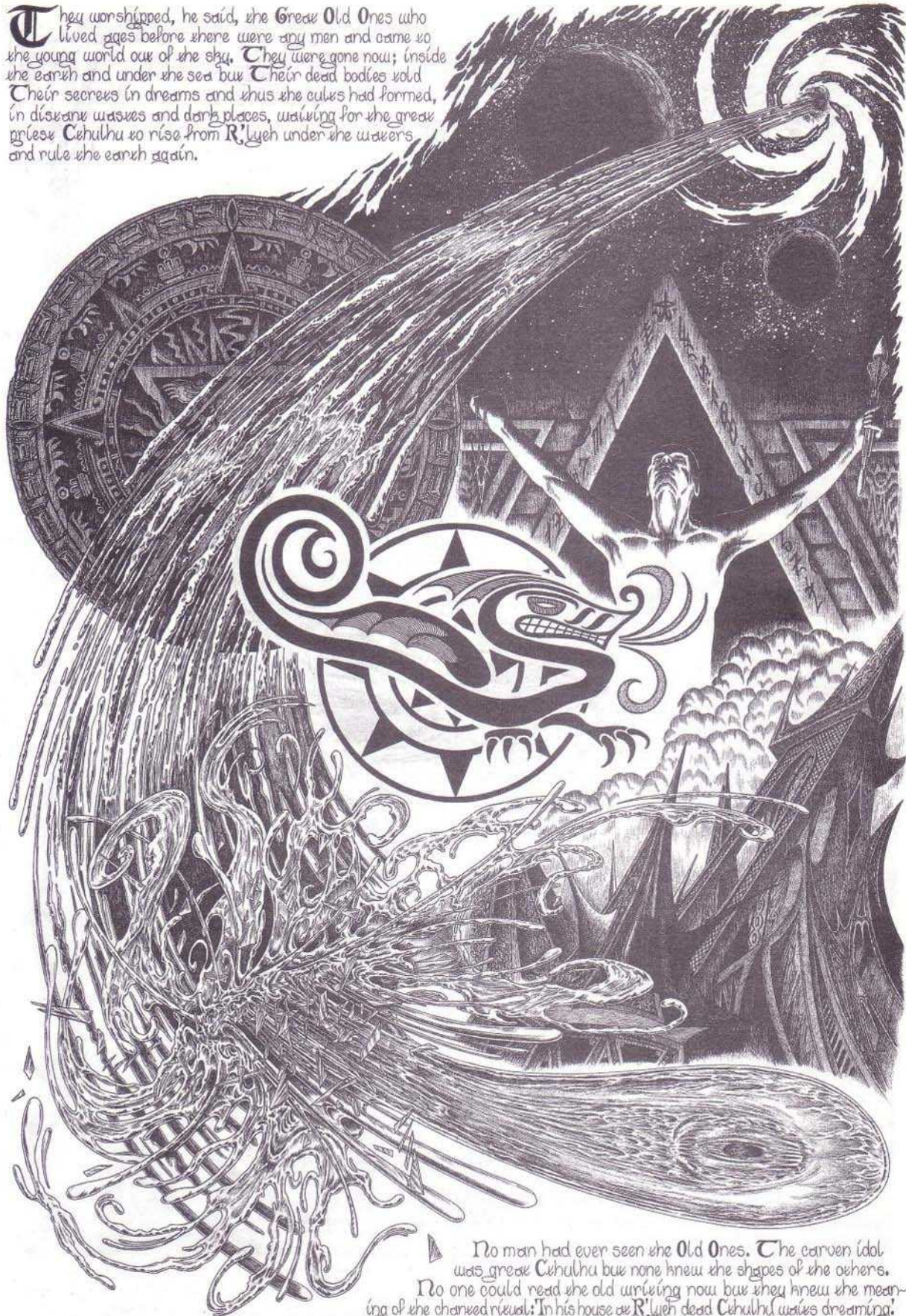


In the ensuing din and chaos five of the worshippers were killed, two wounded and forty-seven rounded up, many others having escaped. The stone image on the monolith was removed and taken with the prisoners back to New Orleans.



Most of them were West Indian or Portuguese giving a colouring of voodooism to their ceremonies. One of them, a mestizo named Old Casero gave the fullest account of the cult.

They worshipped, he said, the Great Old Ones who lived ages before there were any men and came to the young world out of the sky. They were gone now; inside the earth and under the sea but their dead bodies told their secrets in dreams and thus the cults had formed, in distant wastes and dark places, waiting for the great priest Cehulhu to rise from R'lyeh under the waters and rule the earth again.

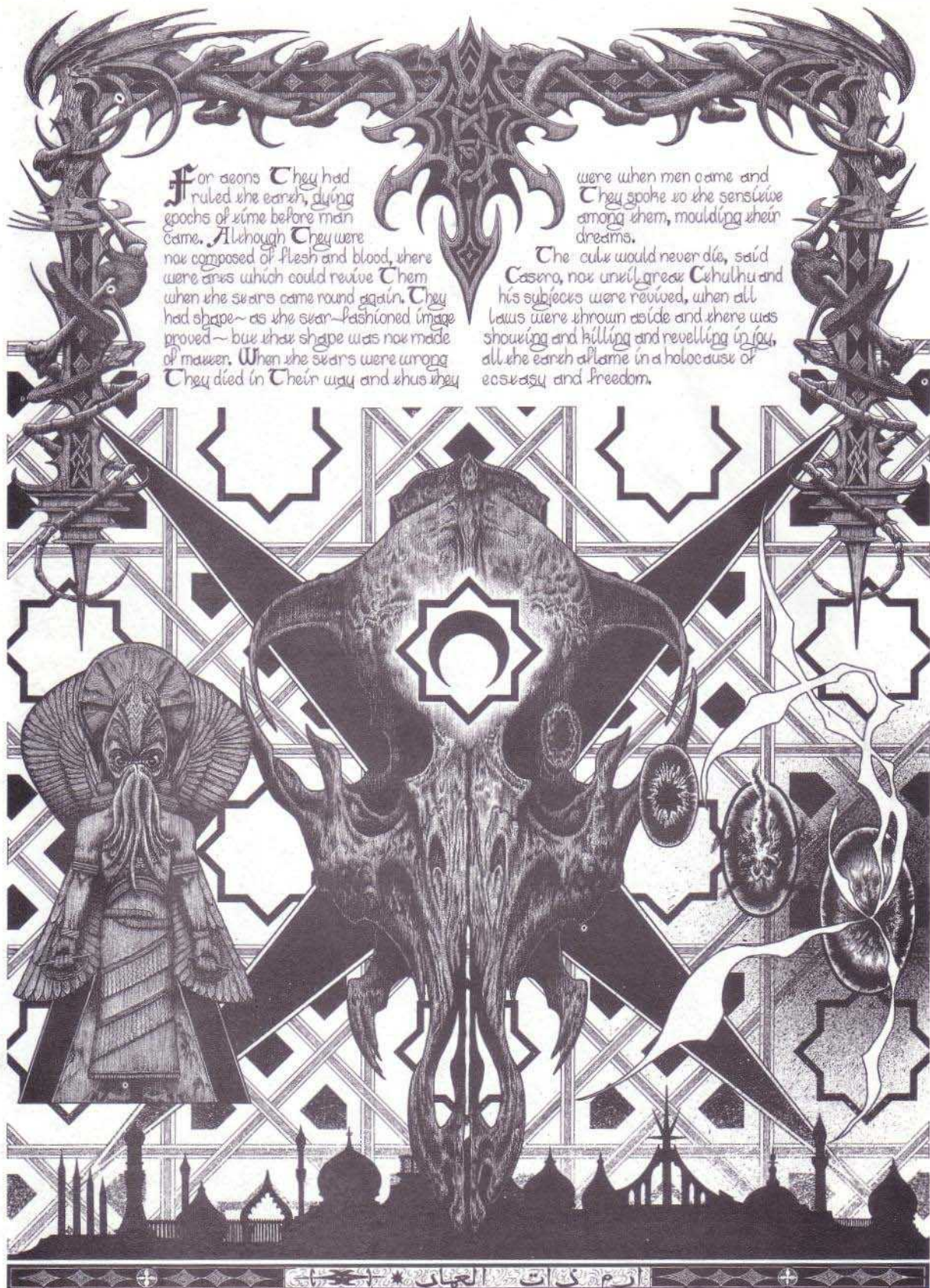


No man had ever seen the Old Ones. The carved idol was great Cehulhu but none knew the shapes of the others. No one could read the old writing now but they knew the meaning of the charmed ritual: In his house at R'lyeh dead Cehulhu waits dreaming!

For aeons They had ruled the earth, dying epochs of time before man came. Although They were now composed of flesh and blood, there were ones which could revive Them when the sears came round again. They had shape—as the sear-fashioned image proved—but that shape was not made of matter. When the sears were wrong They died in Their way and thus they

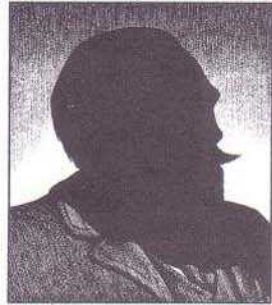
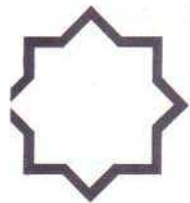
were when men came and They spoke to the sensitive among them, moulding their dreams.

The cult would never die, said Casara, not until great Cehulhu and his subjects were revived, when all laws were thrown aside and there was shouting and killing and revelling in joy, all the earth aflame in a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom.



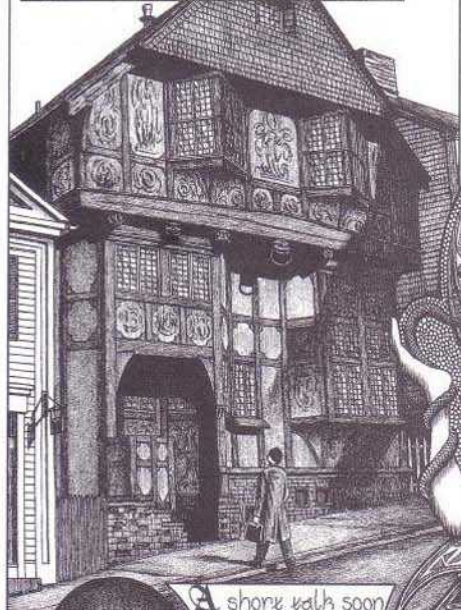
The centre of the cult lay in Arabia, where Irem, City of Pillars, dreams hidden and untouched. Few knew of the cult, no books had ever hinted of it, only the Necronomicon of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred held double meanings which the initiated might interpret: That is not dead which can eternal live and with strange deons even death may die.

It was his search for corroboration of Casero's tale that had brought Legrasse to the meeting; little wonder the surprise of my uncle when he heard the story of the young sculptor who had dreamed not only of the swamp-figure and its hieroglyphics but also of precise words from the formula uttered by the Eskimos and Louisianans.

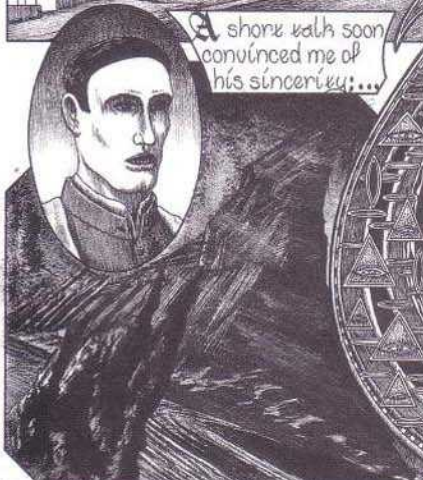
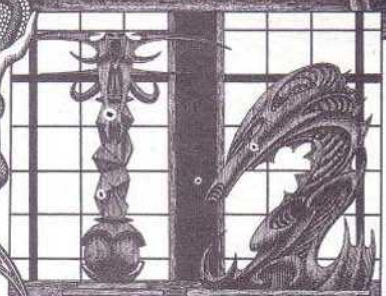


Believing Wilcox to have invented these dreams, I decided to make a trip to Providence to press him for an answer.

We lived there alone in the Fleur-de-Lys Building in Thomas Street.



I found him at work in his rooms where I had cause to concede admiration for his remarkable clay statues.

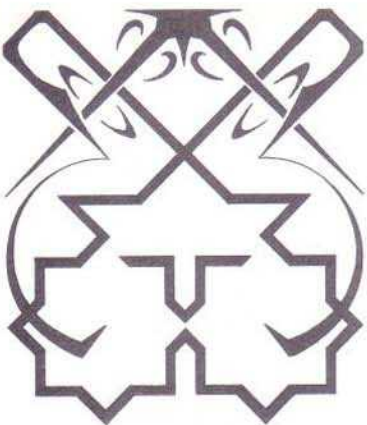


A short talk soon convinced me of his sincerity...



he spoke of his dreams in a strangely poetic fashion; the Cyclopean city of slimy green stone—whose geometry, he oddly said, was all wrong...

and the ceaseless calling from underground: 'Cehulhu Pheagn', 'Cehulhu Pheagn'.

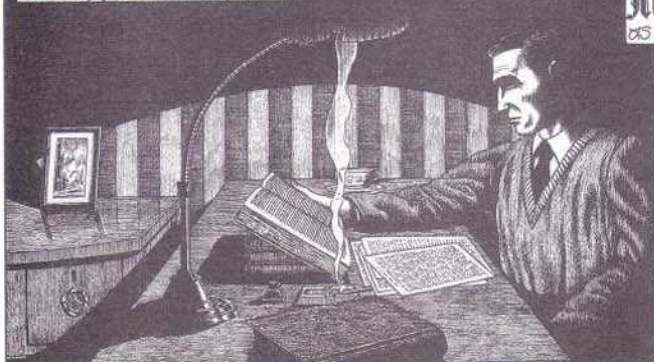


The menelion of words from that dread ritual shook me despite my rational beliefs and yet I still felt Wilcox had heard of the cult in some casual way which surfaced later in his fever dreams and his art.

Later on, I visited New Orleans, walked with Legrasse and some of the others and saw the frightful stone image.



Hearing their stories first hand excited me afresh and I felt sure I was on the track of a very real, very secret and very ancient religion.



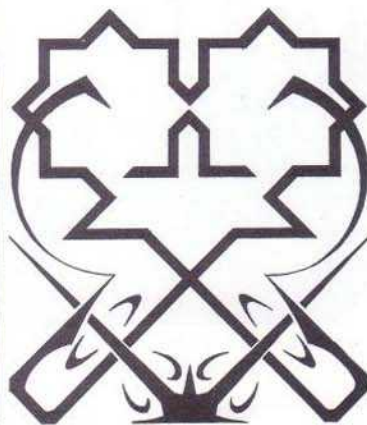
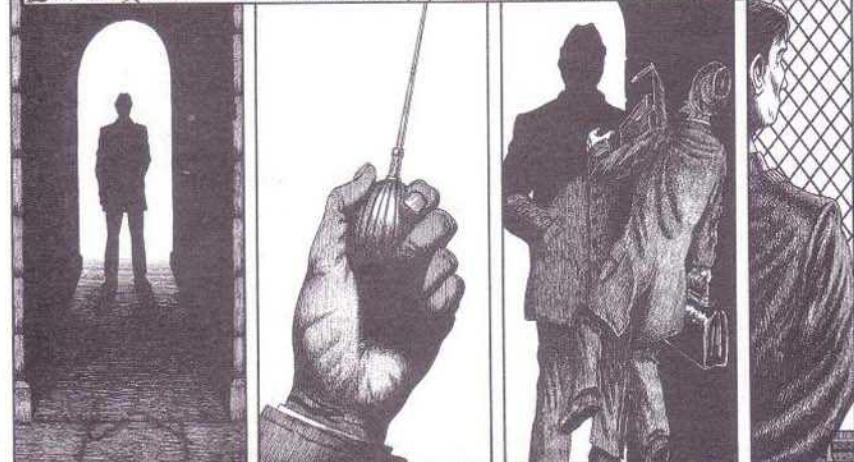
My attitude was one of absolute materialism as I wish it still were.



25 - Dream and Dream Work of H.A. Wilcox
Thomas St., Providence, Rhode Island.
concerns Henry Anthony
School of...

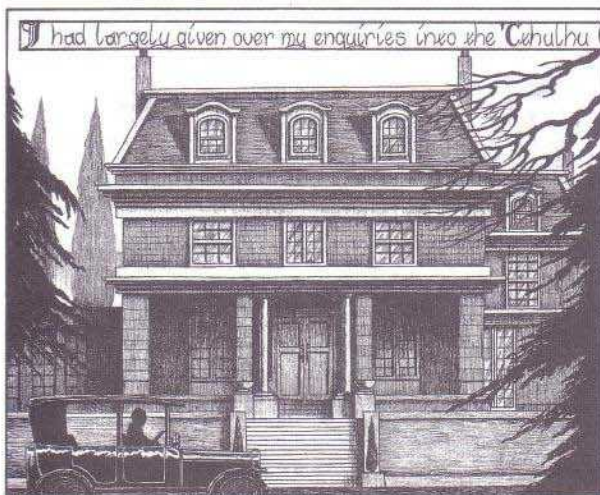
I discounted with a most inexplicable perversity the coincidence of the dream notes and odd cuttings collected by Professor Angell.

One thing which I now know is that my uncle's death was far from natural - he knew too much. Whether I shall go as he did remains to be seen.



III. The Madness from the Sea.

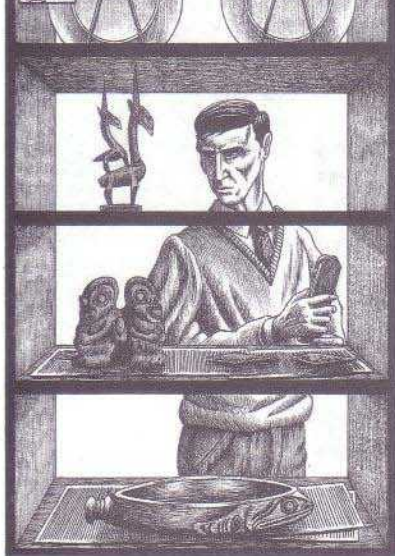
If heaven ever wishes to grant me a boon, it will be a vernal effacing of the residues of a mere chance which fixed my eye on a certain piece of sheet-paper: an old number of an Australian journal, the Sydney Bulletin for April 18 1925.



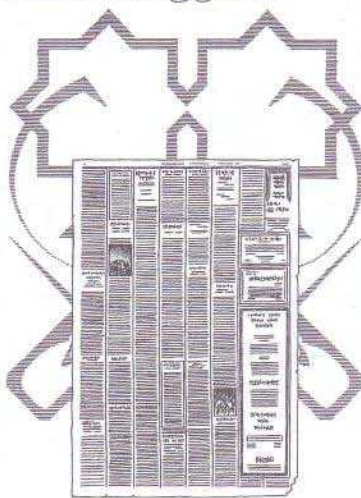
I had largely given over my enquiries into the 'Cehulhu Cule' and was visiting a learned friend; a museum curator of Paverson, New Jersey.



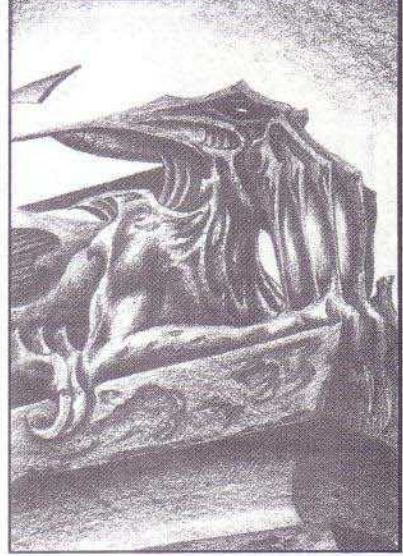
Examining one day the reserve specimens in a rear room of the museum, an odd picture caught my eye.



It was the Sydney Bulletin I have mentioned, for my friend has wide affiliations in foreign parts.



Although the accompanying text was brief, its suggestions were of portentous significance to my flagging quest; I carefully tore it out.



The headline read:
MYSTERY DERELICT FOUND AT SEA

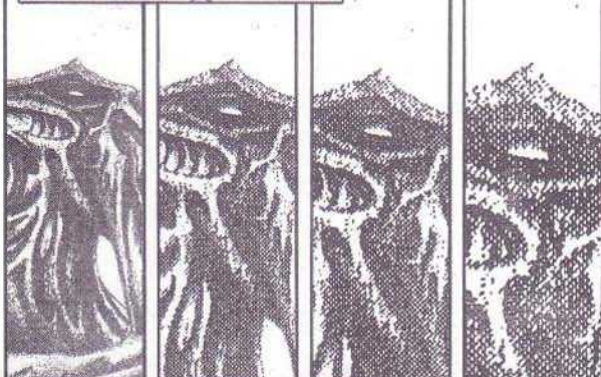
The freighter Vigilant had arrived in Sydney towing the disabled but heavily armed Alert of Dunedin which they had found on April 12th with one living and one dead man aboard. The living man was delirious and clutching a stone idol of unknown origin which he had found in a shrine in the ship.

He was a Norwegian, Gustaf Johansen, second mate of the schooner Emma of Auckland. Sailing for Callao, a storm had thrown them south and on March 22nd they encountered the Alert manned by a crew of Kanakas and half-castes who ordered them to turn back. When they refused, the Alert opened fire with heavy brass cannon. Showing fight, the crew of the Emma

managed to board and subdue the Alert. At the end of the attack the Emma had sunk due to damage, its captain and first mate had been killed and the entire crew of the Alert were dead or dying. Johansen and the remaining men decided to sail ahead in the Alert; the next day they landed on an uncharted island where six of the men somehow died ashore. Johansen and the other man William Briden left in the Alert and were rescued a few days later, Briden having died also by that time of excitement or exposure.

Reports from Dunedin stated that the Alert and its ill-regarded crew had set sail in haste after the storm and earth tremors of March 1st. Johansen was described as a sober and worthy man and an inquiry into the events had been announced.

What a train of ideas this started in my mind! How was it that the earthquake and storms coincided with the incident of Wilcox's fever? I thought of the words of Casara, of the sunken sea-born Old Ones and their mastery of dreams.

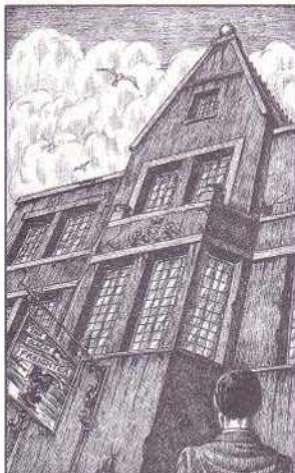


Was I hovering on the brink of cosmic horrors beyond man's power to bear?

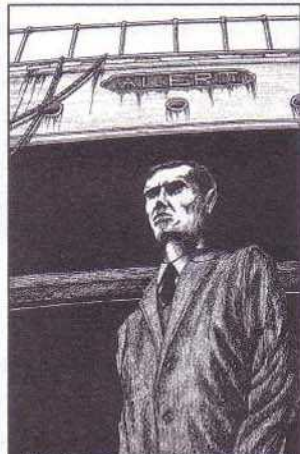
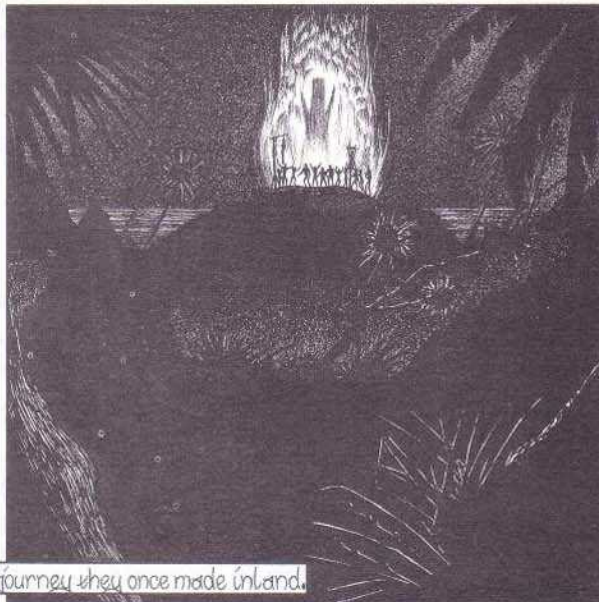
That evening I bade my horse adieu and took a train for San Francisco.



In less than a month I was in New Zealand.

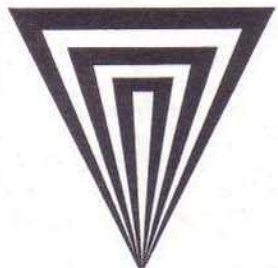
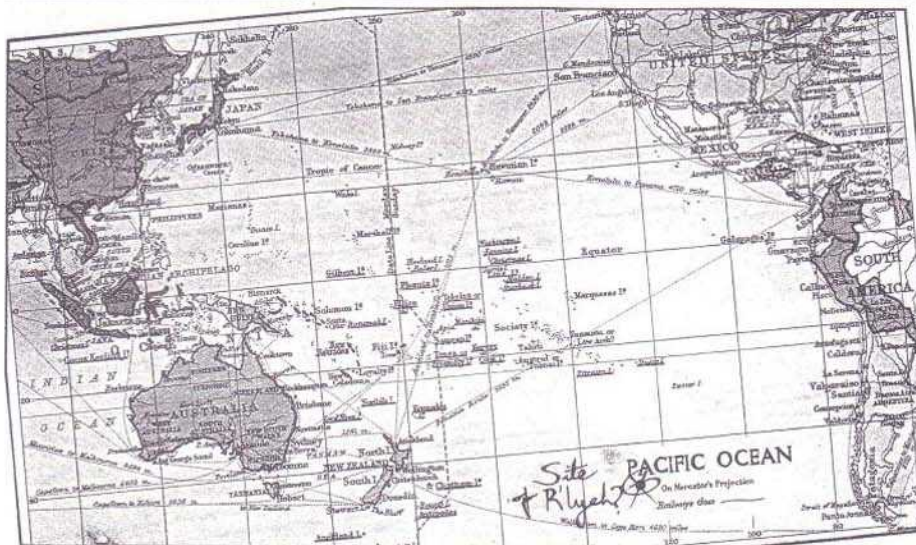


Once there, however, I found that little was known of the strange cult members in the old edverts save for a journey they once made inland.



In Auckland I learned that Johansen had returned with yellow hair turned white and after inconclusive questioning at Sydney had sold his house and sailed with his wife for Oslo.

After that I went to Sydney and talked profitlessly with seamen and members of the vice-admiralty court. I saw the Alien as Circular Quay but gained nothing from its noncommittal bulk.



In the Sydney Museum I was able to study the baleful image which geologists had vowed was of no earthly stone.

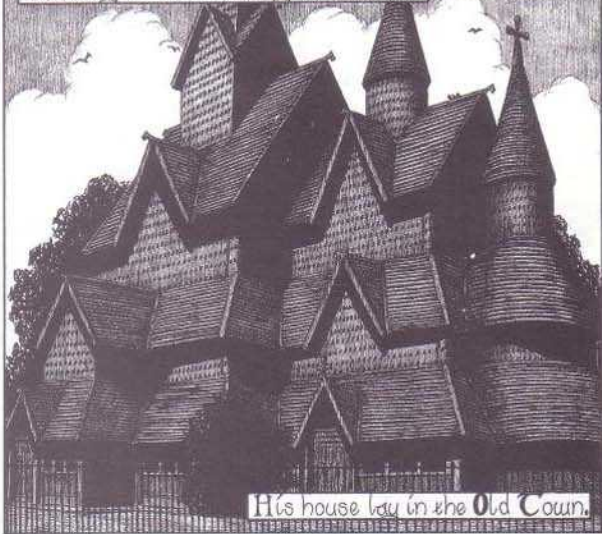


Once more I thought of Casero's words: "They had come from the sears and had brought Their images with Them."



Shaken with such a mental revolution as I had never before known, I resolved to visit Johansen.

Sailing for London, I re-embarked at once for Norway, arriving in Oslo one day in autumn.



His house lay in the Old Town.

His wife answered my knock and I was seing with disappointment when she told me that Gustaf Johansen was no more.



He had returned a broken man.



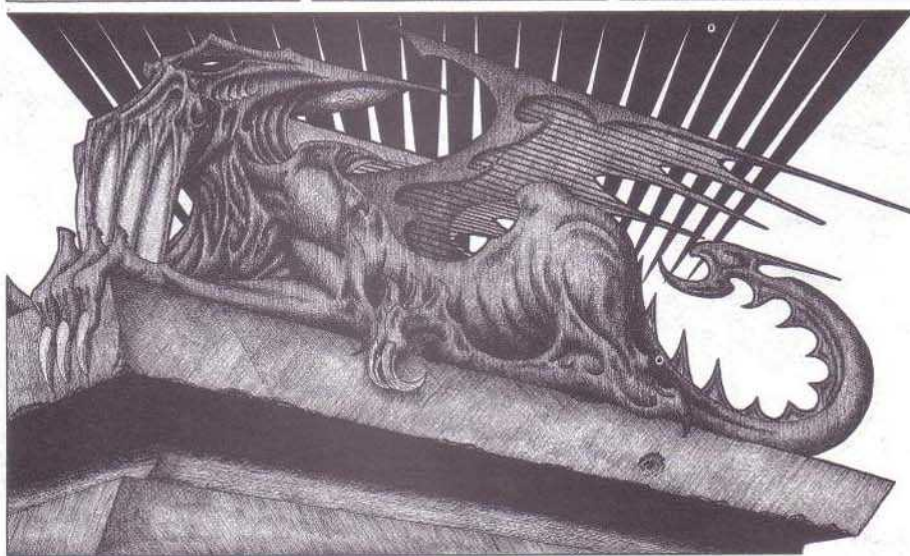
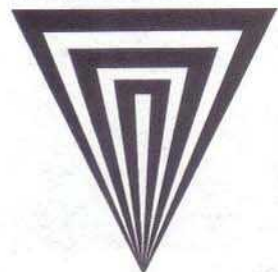
He told his wife no more than I knew already but he had left a long manuscript written in English to safeguard her from the peril of casual perusal.

Shortly after, a bundle of papers falling from an attic had knocked him down in the street.



He was dead before the ambulance could reach him.

I now felt gnawing at my vitals that dark terror which will never leave me till I, too, am at rest; accidentally or otherwise. Persuading the widow my interest was genuine, I took the manuscript with me back to London.



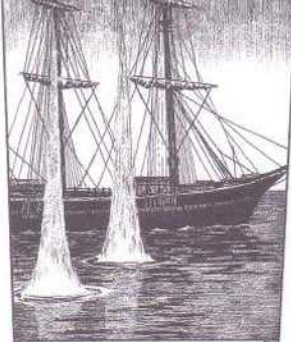
It was a simple rambling thing, a naive sailor's effort at a postscript diary. I cannot attempt to transcribe it but I will tell its gist enough to show why the sound of water against the ship's sides became so unendurable to me that I stopped my ears with cotton.



Johansen's voyage began just as he had told the vice admiral. The Emma, in ballast, felt the full force of the earthquake-born storm.



Once more under control, the ship was making good progress when held up by the Alert on March 22nd.



Of the swarthy cult blends he speaks with significant horror.

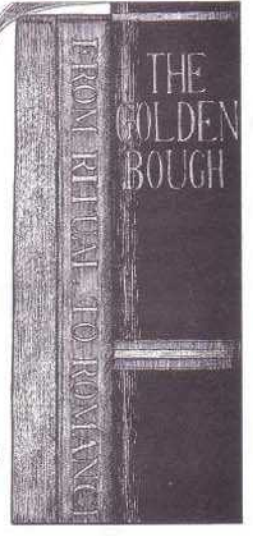
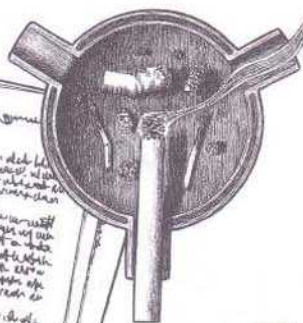
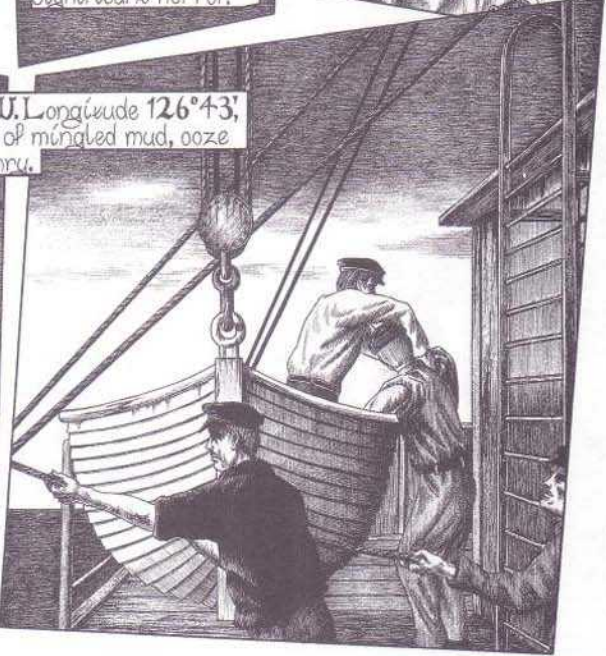
Some peculiarly abominable qualities about them made their destruction seem almost a duty.



Driven ahead by curiosity in their captured yacht, they sight a great stone pillar sticking out of the sea;...

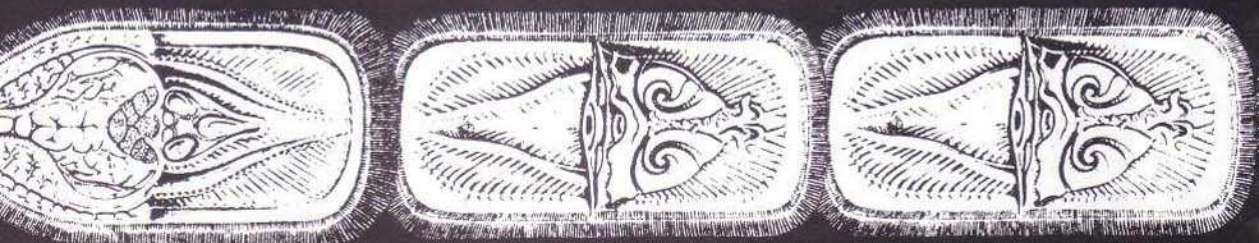
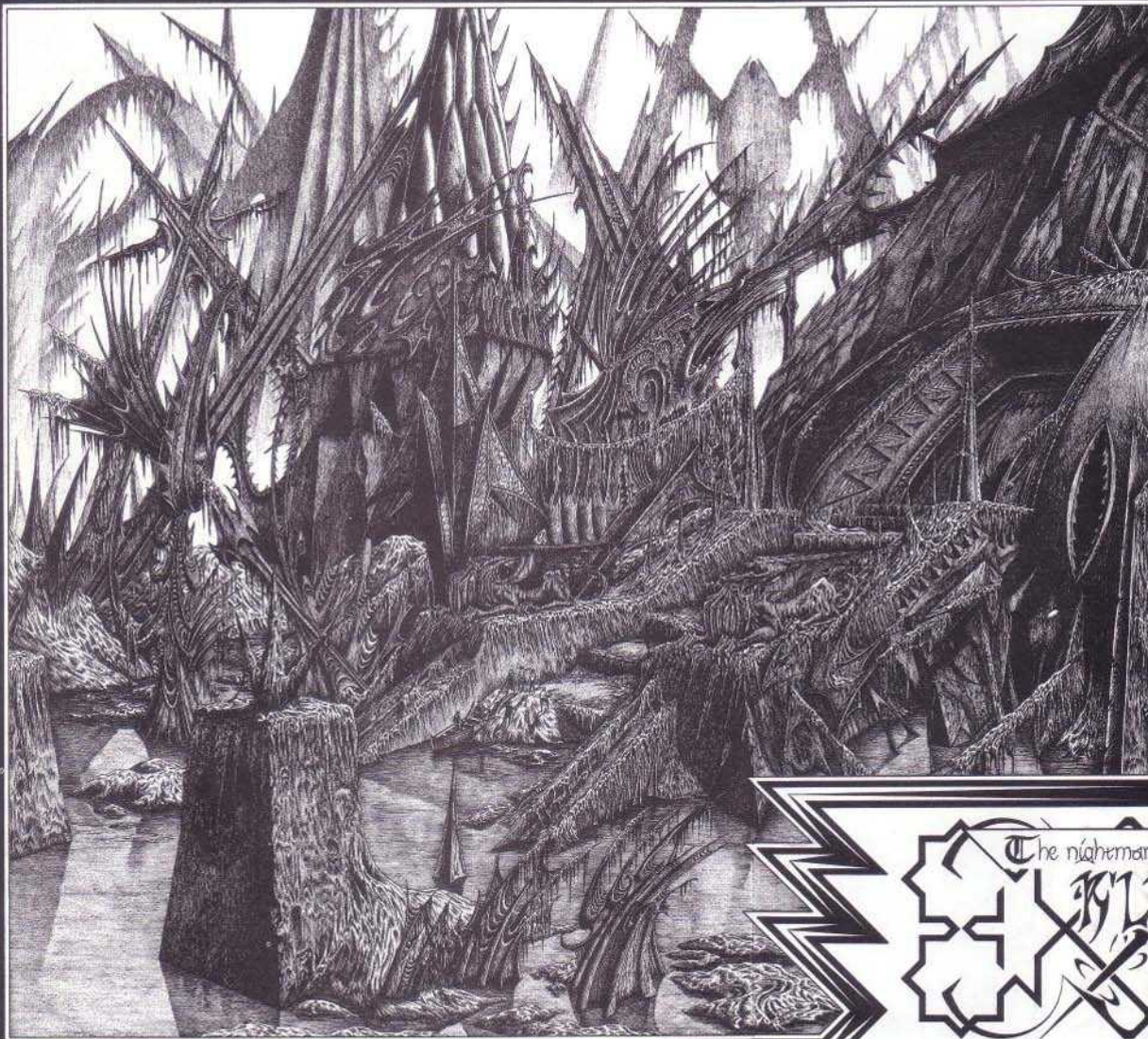
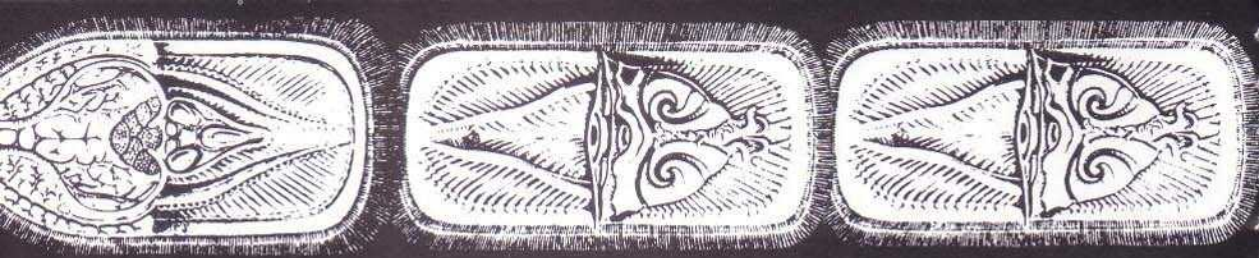


...in S. Latitude 47° 9', W. Longitude 126° 43', they come upon a coastline of mingled mud, ooze and weedy Cyclopean masonry.



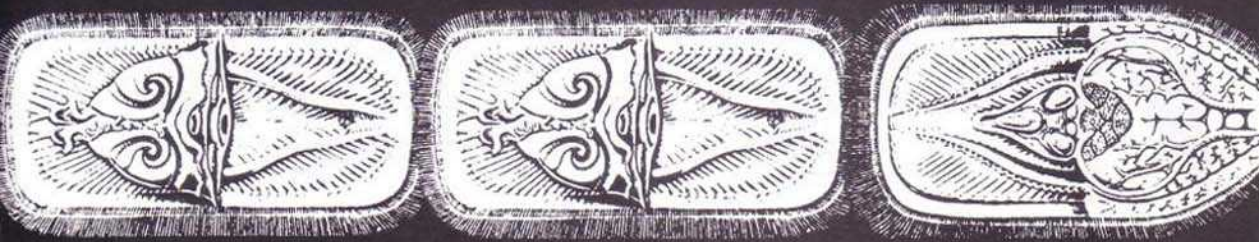
*It could be nothing less than the
tangible substance of earth's
supreme terror...*







the corpse-city of



Something like fright had come over all the explorers before much was seen. Each would have fled had he not feared the scorn of the others.

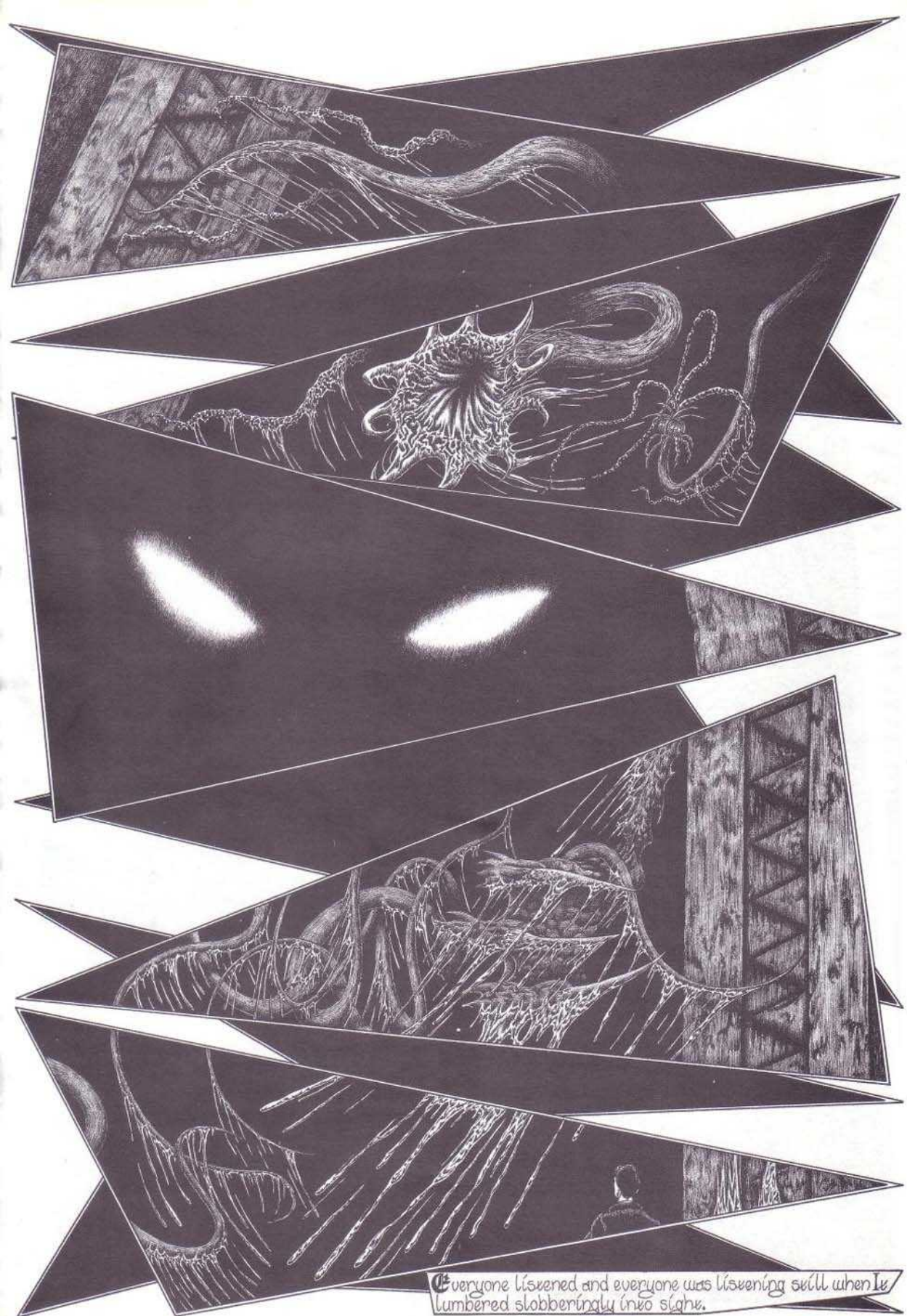
It was Rodríguez who, climbing ahead, shouted of what he had found...

...an immense portal of grotesquely carved stone.

Donovan, by climbing up the edge, managed somehow to tip the balance of the great door - it gave inward softly and slowly.

The odour arising from the depths was intolerable.

Something stirred down there.

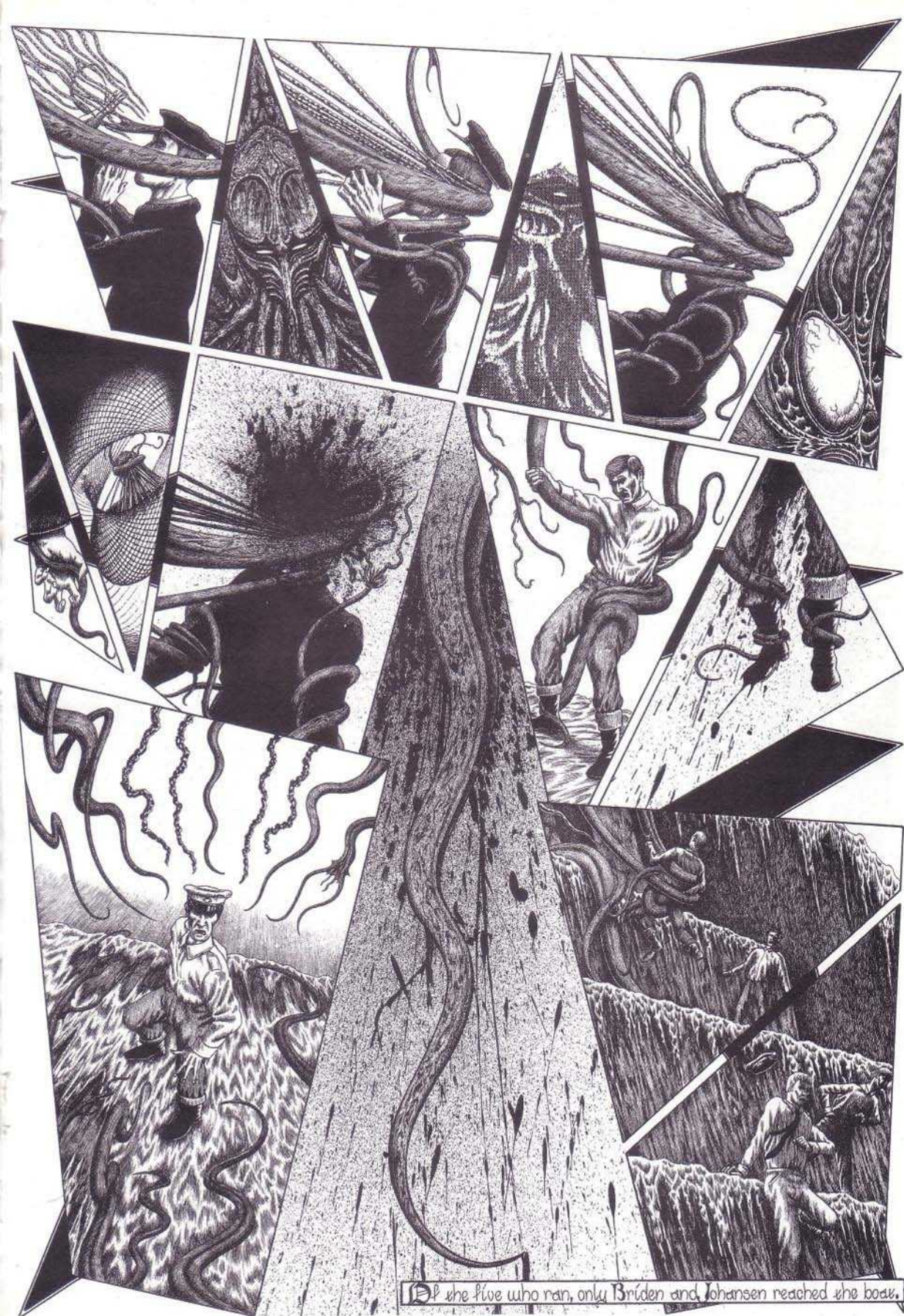


Everyone listened and everyone was listening still when he lumbered slobberingly into sight.

What wonder that across the earth poor Wilcox raved with fever in that telepathic insanity? The stars were right again and what an age-old cult had failed to do by design, a band of innocent sailors had done by accident.



After nine millions of years great Cthulhu was loose again, and ravening for delight.



Of the five who ran, only Briden and Johansen reached the boat.

Steam had not been suffered to go down entirely and it was the work of only a few moments to get the *Alex* under way.

As she churned the waters the *Alex* thing from the sears slavered and gibbered on the masonry of that channel shore...

...then slid greasily into the water in pursuit.

Briden looked back and went mad but, Johansen had not given out yet.

Resolving on a desperate chance he set the engine on full and turned the ship around.

As the steam mounted he drove the vessel head on against the pursuing monstrosity.

When he looked back, Johansen saw the scattered remnants nebulously recombining as the *Alex* drew away from the seething water.

That was all.

After that he only brooded over the idol in the cabin and attended to food for himself and the maniac by his side; he felt too drained to navigate.

Then came the storm of April 2nd and a gathering of clouds about his consciousness...



Out of the dream came rescue—the Vigilant, the court, the streets of Dunedin, and the long voyage home. He would write of what he knew before death came; death would be a boon if only it could blot out the memories.

That was the document I read which I have placed in the tin box with the bas-relief and Professor Angell's papers.



With it shall go this record of mine—this rest of my own sanity.



I have looked upon all that the universe has to hold of horror and the skies of spring and the flowers of summer must ever afterward be poison to me.

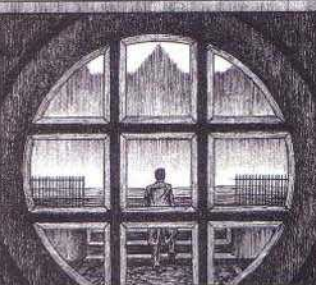




But I do not think my time will be long; I know too much and the city still lives.



Cthulhu still lives too, I suppose.



This accursed city is sunk once more, for the Vigilant sailed over the spot after the storm.



Yet what has risen may sink, and what has sunk may rise. Loathsomeness walks and dreams in the deep, and decay spreads over the tottering cities of men.

It is only a matter of time...

The End



Story: H.P. Lovecraft ~1926

Art: John Coulthart ~1988

